

SHORTEST DISTANCE TO CLEAN WATER

Challenge

Veolia Water Company Indianapolis is one of the nation's largest water utilities, serving over 260,000 customers in central Indiana. Using paper work orders for hydrant testing, valve testing, and customer service issues was a cumbersome method of managing operations and collecting data. Veolia turned to a customized Palm PDA computing system to update and improve their practices.

Action

Many of the field employees had minimal computer experience, but Veolia found a creative way to overcome that obstacle - field employees were given Palm PDA devices and encouraged to play games so they would become familiar with the controls and the text writing capabilities. They also received training, practice data, and a brief "cheat sheet" before being sent into the field.

The improved system eliminates several manual reports and automated order processing. Field crews complete as many work orders as possible, then sync their PDAs with the computers back at base. They can sync up on site, through a PC, or using the PDA's modem. At night the work continues. New work orders are mapped and routes maximizing time and travel are loaded onto the PDAs.

Results

- Since 1999, PDAs have been used daily by 30-40 service field crews to process over 229,000 work orders
- Employees with minimal computer experience are now Palm-savvy and a valuable part of data input and collection
- Field data accuracy has improved, and redundant, time-consuming paperwork has been eliminated
- Veolia has a cost-effective and resource-efficient way to manage work orders



*Route mapping and automating work orders
streamlined water company services*